



## Schilling Manor

*Lieutenant Colonel Jerry L. McKain, United States Army*

**T**HE old adage "the Army takes care of its own" represents a value long held in esteem by the US Army. The manner and means by which this value has been translated have been many and varied, ranging from slogans to extensive programs.

The Army has come to see the value of community responsibility and human dignity operationally applied. This is done primarily, although not exclusively, through the Army Community Service (ACS) Program. Formally established in 1965, the ACS provides a coordinated and responsive approach to the prevention and alleviation of personal and family problems. The past five years have aptly demonstrated the potential of the program in promoting community stability and community identification—a sense of belonging.

A unique look at the value of ACS Programs is provided by a sociological oddity in the heart of Kansas. Schilling Manor, a subpost of Fort Riley, is one of the most unusual communities in the world. It is the home of about 700 wives and 2,500 children of servicemen, of all ranks and branches, serving unaccompanied tours overseas.

Schilling Manor officially came into being on 1 January 1966 when the Army assumed responsibility for the 735-unit housing area left vacant by the deactivation of Schilling Air Force Base near Salina, Kansas. Thirty families from nearby Fort Riley moved to Schilling Manor in the fall of 1965 after their husbands had departed for Vietnam with the 1st Infantry Division. The new community was to be an experimental project in the fullest sense of the word.

An early discussion centered on the need for services. It was originally thought that most of the necessary services could be provided within the housing area. The subpost commander's office was located in a two-bedroom house, with one room used as a Family Assistance Office. Housing, supply, transportation, and maintenance sections were located in an adjoining house. Medical care was provided from the old dental building, and a small branch Army exchange was operated from two bays of the base service station. The chapel was designated as a subpost chapel, and all community activities utilized the chapel annex.

The need for a more adequate service structure became quickly evident to the staff and residents. Schilling Manor grew into an efficient operation featuring an administrative-maintenance complex, two activities buildings, a post theater, a child care center, a commissary-Army exchange complex, a chapel, a dispensary, a Military Police-sheriff substation, two elementary schools, two swimming pools, and a gymnasium.

Of particular interest is the Army Community Service aspect of the total post operation. The ACS Program at Schilling Manor was formally established in January 1967. Until

**The hub of social activity at Schilling**





Schilling Little League baseball

then, services had been provided on a limited basis by the subpost commander, administrative noncommissioned officer, and the Waiting Wives Club. As the population increased, the necessity of a formalized ACS Program with a full-time staff became apparent. In October 1966, the old Schilling Air Force Base Service Club was obtained through lease arrangement and designated as the US Army Community Service Center. Also, in October, a Social Work Officer arrived and was assigned as Army Community Service Officer.

At the present time, the Schilling Manor Army Community Service is a centralized, multipurpose family service agency that provides for the needs of the community through two sections—Personal Services and Activities.

The Personal Services Section provides four essential services: individual and family problem evaluation and counseling, consultation, community organization, and personnel actions. Most of the problems encountered can be alleviated by assisting the family to use its own or community resources. Other problems are related more to the community, in general, requiring broader organizational efforts. Individual and family counseling is primarily concerned with short-term assistance. Due to the limitations of alternate resources in the immediate vicinity, longer term counseling assistance is occasionally provided.

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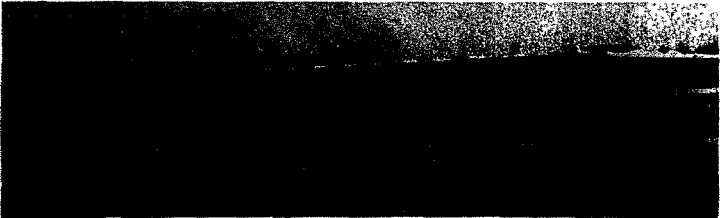


**Schilling Little League football**

The Activities Section provides three essential elements: athletics, group activities, and arts and crafts. These activities keep two buildings, a gymnasium, two swimming pools, and the athletic fields busy year around. Wives participate in the social and committee work of the Wives Club, and are invited to attend classes and clubs such as bridge, volleyball, exercise, sewing, and arts and crafts, to include a well-equipped ceramics shop. Children's activities are designed to provide experience in leadership, group cooperation, and plenty of exercise. Sixteen Little League baseball teams were active in the 1970 season. The largest Scout program in the district kept boys busy with camp-outs and community service activities.

The Schilling Manor ACS Program is much more comprehensive than the usual programs. The Schilling program contains elements of family service, special services, Adjutant General personnel, and mental health—everything from Little League baseball through naturalization and citizenship classes to professional counseling.

**Schilling Manor grade school**



The overriding concept of the Schilling Army Community Service is to support and increase the military family's feeling of community identification and belonging by providing for family needs in a coordinated and personalized manner.

Much more than a do-gooder scheme, the conceptional framework for the Schilling program is based soundly in behavioral science theory, research, and experience. There is a direct and strong correlation between family problems and a family's feelings of belonging to a particular group or community. When a family feels no sense of community identification, they also have an attitude of hopelessness in solving their problems, misuse available assistance, and express their frustration in aberrant behavior.

In many cases, prevention and alleviation of individual and family breakdown can be best accomplished by the helping hand of neighbors and friends. In this regard, a great deal of emphasis is placed at Schilling on working with neighborhood and social groups.

The core of the Schilling Army Community Service "frontline" volunteer program is the neighborhood or block chairman (chairwoman). The housing area is divided into 37 neighborhoods or "blocks," each composed of approximately 20 families. Each block has a chairman. Their primary function is to act as good neighbors by welcoming new families, acquainting them with neighbors and community resources, and offering themselves as a point of contact to whom neighbors can turn for help or referral. If outside help is required, it is coordinated through the Community Service Center. Regular meetings are held, interspersed with additional training seminars.

Such neighborhood volunteer programs build upon existing strength in the Schilling

### **The younger set is not forgotten**





*US Army Photos*

**Social activities are planned and coordinated**

community since a large portion of the military families arrive at Schilling with positive expectations and identifications. Each new family is given a personal interview in which they are asked their reasons for coming to Schilling. In one such survey, 91 percent of the wives indicated that they wanted to be with their own kind, or words to that effect. Perhaps this attitude could be expected since Schilling attracts mostly wives of field grade officers and senior noncommissioned officers—families who have lost regional ties and found a home in the Army. The mean enlisted rank of Schilling residents in June 1970 was E7.

The effectiveness of the Schilling experience seems to be well supported by empirical evidence although statistical data is presently lacking. However, some indication of the effectiveness of the approach may be found in the fact that, in five years of operation, no major incidents of psychosocial instability have occurred. Problems have, of course, been present, but have been recognized and handled. Approximately 98 percent of the departing families indicated on out-processing evaluation forms that they were pleased with their stay at Schilling. The large number of returnees speaks highly of the effectiveness of Schilling in meeting the military family needs.

Schilling Manor has become a prime example of the desire of the Army to take care of its own in a way that emphasizes the dignity of the individual and the military family, and alleviates some of the problems of unaccompanied tours. Army Community Service has played a major role in this effort by the translation of sound theory and research into attractive programs.